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REMARKS BY

**U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA'S REMARKS
AT
STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE
EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES**

**DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
SHERPUR DISTRICT
July 19, 2012**

Md. Zakir Hossain, Deputy Commissioner, Sherpur District, Honored local government officials; friends and colleagues

Asalaam m'alaikum

Of the people, by the people, for the people ...

These words are how one of America's best presidents, Abraham Lincoln, defined good government.

He said those words 150 years ago but I think this description of democratic governance ... of the people, by the people, for the people ... is as relevant today as it was a century and a half ago.

Think of the experiences that we have just heard.

We heard leaders of an upazilla, of a union parishad, of a pourashava and of citizens themselves describe their experiences in creating effective local governance.

They were sharing with us their successes and challenges in creating and leading local governance that is ... of, by and for the people.

Abraham Lincoln did not say that creating such governance would be easy. It certainly is not ...

In America, we have been working over 200 years to perfect our governance, and it is still a work in progress ... we still have far to go. I suspect the struggle to improve governance is one that has no end.

I am proud that America partners with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen local government.

I deeply treasure the U.S.-Bangladesh partnership in the Strengthening Democratic Local Governance project. I think this is one of the best things that the America-Bangladesh partnership is doing.

This project seeks to strengthen local government structures, as defined in the Bangladesh Constitution.

We have heard the numbers, but let me repeat them.

The Strengthening Democratic Local Governance project has worked with 16 local government units in Sherpur.

It has trained 224 local governance officials in Sherpur on financial management, revenue generation, budgeting, service delivery and monitoring.

In line with the local government laws enacted in 2009, the project has helped citizens establish 16 Citizen in Governance forums in Sherpur, and it has trained these citizens on how to engage effectively with local government.

Thanks to this project the citizens and their local government are working together to develop and implement strategic plans.

The project also gives special attention to engaging women, so they, too, can participate in, contribute to and benefit from local governance.

Now you understand why I have such deep affection for the Strengthening Democratic Local Governance project and my pride in this partnership between America and Bangladesh.

This project, which brings together in the most constructive fashion, local government and the governed, is building real democracy at the local level as envisioned by the Bangladesh Constitution...

... is making real, here in Sherpur and all across wonderful Bangladesh, the vision of Abraham Lincoln ...

... the vision of creating effective, democratic governance that is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people.

I am so very proud that this partnership between America and Bangladesh is helping to forge strong bonds between local government and the citizens.

I believe that these bonds ... this local partnership between the governed and those who govern ...

... will further empower the great people of Bangladesh and unleash their boundless energy, their creativity, their dynamism, their generosity, their entrepreneurial skills, their deep resilience ...

... thus helping build the new Bangladesh, the middle-income Bangladesh, the Golden Bangladesh, the next Asian Tiger ... the Bengal tiger!

I thank you for making this such a motivational and inspirational day for me.

I now am more strongly convinced than ever that the future of this magnificent country is indeed bright.

I look forward to our further discussion ... Thank you.

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GR/ 2012